



WORKFORCE CONNECTION



Anaconda Job Service
One Stop Workforce Center
307 East Park Street
Anaconda, MT 59711



Manager's Overview

Marilyn Ohman, Manager

ARE YOU THE EMPLOYER OF CHOICE?



Are you the employer of choice? What makes an 'employer of choice'? One might say the pay, one might say the environment, one might say the benefits. But if you can't offer higher pay or you can't afford benefits....can you still be the employer of choice? Absolutely. It's not what you can't offer, but what you can and are willing to offer. Say you are a small business with 4-5 employees and need to fill a minimum wage full time job. First of all, most jobs offering minimum wage may not attract highly skilled, highly job specific talented people. Your applicant pool may be minimally skilled but willing to work...its up to you as the employer as to what you want in an employee. With the lack of skilled workers, maybe employers are looking at hiring in the wrong fashion. Today, a job isn't just a job...its the ability to earn money and in most cases....take care of a family too. That's tough to do on minimum wage only. So what can you do as the employer? First of all analyze and really know the needs of your business. If you see an applicant that can fit most of your needs but not all....is there something you can do to meet them half way...

NOTICE!!

MINIMUM WAGE

INCREASE!!

The Montana minimum wage increases again on July 24, 2008 to \$6.55/hour. The minimum wage is subject to a cost-of living adjustment based on the Consumer Price Index no later than September 30th of each year. Montana's minimum wage is to be the greater of the federal or current state wage. Effective July 24, 2008, Montana's minimum wage will increase to \$6.55/hr based on the federal minimum wage in-

Here's some food for thought: An employee asks to have an alternate lunch schedule that is out of your normal 12-1 time frame. Look at it as a possibility and not as a road block. Is it essential for he/she to take it at noon? In some cases it may be if it would be detrimental to your business (example: the doors would close during that timeframe because there is a lack of coverage)....If it doesn't affect your business to accommodate a different hour and the only problem standing in the way is 'this is how we have ALWAYS done it'....stop and think of the value of that employee to your business and take the next steps. Ask why the request? Could it be they need to pick up kids after school so they get home or to a day care safely? Maybe they have an elderly parent that needs their help at a certain time during the day because of medication schedules or appointments. Being somewhat flexible will be the 'benefits' that you CAN offer. In the workforce of today...expectations are different and those that stick with the 'old school' rules will find themselves struggling in the employee retention area. And as you all know...the biggest cost to a business today is training new staff. Constant turnover is costly.

Some other thoughts...there is a constant mind set that we at Job Service hear from employers everyday and that is: "they are only going through the motions to apply so they can stay on welfare." Some good information to know...the cash benefits families receive from the Human Services Department are time sensitive/time limited. Any work ready, able body individual is required to seek and find suitable work. Time limits are put on them. It is not a long term benefit and hasn't been for several years. There are very few loopholes in the system anymore. When anyone comes to you with an application, 90% of the time it is for real. And remember the 'ol "assuming" adage and who it reflects on....

Some families may still be eligible even with parents working full time lower wage jobs for: food stamps, child care assistance or CHIP which is a health insurance coverage for qualifying children depending on wages, benefits and/or total earnings of parents. (continued on page 3 EMPLOYER of CHOICE)

Federal Bonding Program

Did you know that there is a Federal Bonding Program that can assist you when you are interested in but hesitant to hire a person that was convicted of a felony? Here's some information:

The Purpose of the Bonding Program is:

- To assist ex-offenders and other at-risk persons with questionable backgrounds to secure a job, which might be denied employment due to their previous personal or employment history.
- To help protect employers from loss of money or property, due to dishonest actions of the potential employee.

The bonding program is a tool for marketing an applicant to prospective employers.

Bonding Program Benefits for the Job Seeker:

- Provides job opportunities to job seekers who have been or may be denied commercial bonding coverage due to their previous personal or employment history.
- Promotes confidence in a job seeker who needs a break to participate in employment and needs a chance to show that he or she can be a productive worker
- Provides fidelity bond insurance for up to six months for any job seeker with risk factors
- Applies to any job except self-employment

Bonding coverage is provided at no cost to the job seeker

Bonding Program Benefits for the Employer:

- Bond coverage is provided at no cost to the employer as an incentive to hire hard to place job applicants.
- The bond coverage is effective the day the new employee begins work with duration of six months.
- The employer gets the worker's skills and abilities without taking the risk of potential theft or dishonesty.
- There are no documents to sign or paperwork to complete.

The bond has no deductible and reimburses the employer for any loss due to employee theft within the specified six-month period.

Who Qualifies for Bonding?

- Individuals who are not commercially bondable due to past questionable behavior which casts doubt upon their credibility or honesty, or who have committed fraudulent or dishonest acts are eligible. This includes:
- Ex-offenders, including anyone with a record of arrest, conviction or imprisonment.
- Those with a poor financial credit history or who have declared bankruptcy.
- Ex-addicts with history of alcohol or drug abuse.
- Those who have been dishonorably discharged from the Armed Forces.

Persons lacking a work history from low-income families.

Job Requirements

- The employer must have a specific date set for the applicant to begin work.
- The applicant must be of legal working age.
- The position will be one where the applicant will work at least 30 hours of steady work per week for a period of six months. Federal taxes must be automatically deducted from the check.
- Ensure that the job is suitable for the applicant.
- **Example:** An individual convicted of drug abuse, should not be placed where drugs are readily accessible like a pharmacy or hospital.

Self-employed and/or franchised individuals are not eligible. This program is intended to help people gain employment with those employers that are hesitant to hire someone who was convicted of a felony in a particular area that the applicant is applying for?

For more information, please call our office at 563-3444. There is a limited number of bonds available per state in a fiscal year starting July 1.

Tri-County Workforce System/One Stop Workforce Center

What it means to you, our business customers.



The Anaconda Job Service Workforce Center recently applied to and was certified as a One Stop Center. What does this mean? Since 2002, the Anaconda Job Service Workforce Center was part of the Southwest Montana Workforce Development System centered out of the One Stop in Butte. A One Stop Center provides services and information to both business customers and job seekers in a seamless delivery system. Although the Anaconda Job Service Workforce Center was already set up to do that, we lacked office management on site to become an operator of a one stop system. Partnering with agencies to deliver a wide variety of services to all of our customers is also a focus of a one stop and workforce system. Other agencies can co-locate or use space on a need basis with the concept of these services are being offered under 'one roof'.

Since we now have management locally and can better concentrate on our service delivery area (Deer Lodge, Powell and Granite County) we decided to apply to be a separate center and have our Community Management Team stand alone as it was a sub-committee under the old One Stop. We felt it was important to concentrate our efforts in this area only. The business plan and consortium agreement was submitted to the State Workforce Investment board at the end of June. An On sight Review was done and it was recommended to the board that the Anaconda Job Service Workforce Center be Certified as a One Stop and the Tri-County CMT be recognized as the advisory body to the center.

Currently the Tri-County Community Management Team consists of representatives from agencies serving the Tri-County Area. The name pretty much says it all. We want to help our communities. Current members are: Anaconda Job Service Workforce Center; Chambers of Commerce; School District #10; Human Resource Council District X11; Rural Employment Opportunities; Hearthstone Senior Services, Anaconda/Deer Lodge County; Anaconda Local Development, 4C's Child Care; Career Futures; U of M College of Technology-Butte; Powell, Deer Lodge and Granite County Literacy Programs; PCA/Family Resource Center, Vocational Rehabilitation Services; Anaconda Job Corps Center and Experience Works. Each agency sends a representative to our quarterly CMT meeting. The focus of the group is to develop a well trained, highly skilled workforce to meet the needs of our communities, businesses and job seekers and to help enhance the economic development and growth in the Tri-County Area. If you are not a part but would like to join or know of other agencies that would benefit, please let us know. Working together WORKS!!!

Currently we are working on a Youth Career Summit scheduled for January 2009 in Anaconda and are inviting all three high schools and the Job Corps Students in the Tri-County Area to learn about careers and jobs and the steps and responsibilities it takes to be successful. We are working on getting the Governor here to speak and to bring in 2 other keynote speakers (one being Martin Bean of Microsoft), along with break out sessions dealing with preparing for college life, apprenticeships, transitioning from school to work and some life skills information.

We also want to incorporate what is our Job Service Employer's Committee into this group and are looking for business people to participate and join our quarterly meetings. The meetings last an hour and a half and are well worth your time. We need business, schools and local government voices in working to meet our mission and goals. If you would like to partner with our Tri-County Community Management Team, please call Marilyn Ohman at 563-4121.

EMPLOYMENT ELIGIBILITY VERIFICATION FORM I-9

As of June 25, 2008; the Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9 has changed and must be used. All employees, citizens and non-citizens, hired after November 6, 1986 and working in the United States, must complete a Form I-9. Employers must keep a current copy on file. For a copy of the form and instructions on how to complete please go to: <http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/I9.pdf>.

Employer of choice continued.....That's not a bad thing...those are resources/benefits that assist them in being able to work in jobs that don't offer benefits or higher wages. And most of you know, raising a family is not cheap. Always be on the lookout for that diamond in the rough. You may be surprised at how well things work out when there is 'flexibility' in the workplace. Maybe you have a full time position you want filled but have only had applicants willing to work part time....use 2 people to fill that full time position. All in all...you have the hours you need someone to work in filled....the key to success is flexibility and creativity....its a changing world.


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ONE STOP WORKFORCE CENTER

307 East Park Street
Anaconda, MT 59711

Phone: 406-563-3444

Superior Service for a Working Montana.



WE'RE ON THE WEB

- wsd.dli.mt.gov/local/anaconda

WE'LL KEEP ASKING.....

**DO YOU WANT TO SAVE MONEY IN YOUR BUSINESS? WE CERTAINLY HOPE SO!!!
READ ON!!!**

Work Opportunity Tax Credit-WOTC



Reap the benefits of being a rural designation with Tax Credits or take advantage of the other targeted categories...this TAX CREDIT is here to WORK FOR YOU!!

Area Employers could be eligible for up to \$9,000 in federal tax credits.

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) is a federal tax credit that reduces the federal tax liability of private employers who hire from nine targeted groups (list of targeted groups can be obtained from Job Service). If you hire an individual from a WOTC targeted group your company may be eligible for up to \$9,000 in federal tax credits. New this year is the target group called 'Rural Renewal County'.

In addition to the regular WOTC Program, Deer Lodge County is one of Nineteen Counties in Montana classified as a Rural Renewal County which meets the criteria of being a designated community Resident (now, one of the targeted groups under the WOTC program).

Individuals qualify if they reside within Deer Lodge County, are at least 18 but not yet 40 years old and complete an IRS Form 8850 on or before the job is offered. Forms must be submitted within 28 days of the employee hire date. No rehires (cannot have worked for the company previously). New hire must stay employed for at least 120 hours over the first year of employment (part-time, full-time or seasonal).

Other targeted groups include: a person who has or is receiving cash public assistance, a qualified veteran; a qualified felon; a vocational rehabilitation referral; a summer youth employee; a food stamp recipient; an SSI recipient and a long-term Family assistance recipient.

For more information regarding this tax credit and/or obtaining documentation, contact the Anaconda Job Service Workforce Center (406) 563-4122 or Montana Workforce Services Division—WOTC Unit at (406) 444-9046 or (800) 726-0615.